101-555

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION, FISCAL YEARS 1990 AND 1991

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Public Law 101-555
101st Congress

An Act

Nov. 15, 1990
[H.R. 3310]

To authorize appropriations for activities of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for fiscal years 1990 and 1991.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is authorized to be appropriated for activities of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration $14,554,000 for fiscal year 1990 and $18,000,000 for fiscal year 1991, together with such sums as may be necessary for increases resulting from adjustments in salary, pay, retirement, other employee benefits required by law, and other nondiscretionary costs, for fiscal year 1991.

SEC. 2. (a) The Congress finds that—

(1) the Pacific Ocean region is of strategic and economic importance to the United States;

(2) other nations, especially the Soviet Union and Japan, are seeking to increase their influence in this region;

(3) because the Pacific Basin communities are geographically isolated and because many are relatively poor, they are in great need of quality, low-cost communications services to maintain contact among themselves and with other countries;

(4) from 1971 until 1985, such communications needs were satisfied by the Pan-Pacific Educational and Cultural Experiments by Satellite Program (hereinafter referred to as the "PEACESAT Program") operating over the ATS-1 satellite of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(5) the ATS-1 satellite ran out of station-keeping fuel in 1985 and has provided only intermittent service since then;

(6) the Act entitled "An Act to provide authorization of appropriations for activities of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration", approved November 3, 1988 (Public Law 100-584; 102 Stat. 2970), authorized $3,400,000 in funding during fiscal years 1988 and 1989 for re-establishing the communications network of the PEACESAT Program;

(7) Congress appropriated $1,700,000 for fiscal year 1988 and $200,000 for fiscal year 1989 for the purposes of re-establishing the communications network of the PEACESAT Program;

(8) since 1988, significant progress has been made to ensure resumption of this vital communications service by repairing earth terminals in the Pacific communities, by identifying the short-term and long-term needs of the residents of these communities, and by negotiating to acquire the use of the GOES-3 satellite owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is expected to provide service from 1990 to 1994;

(9) the National Telecommunications and Information Administration will issue a contract for the design and construction of earth terminals to work with the GOES-3 sat-

ellite by early 1990 that will exhaust the funds previously appropriated;

(10) additional funding will be necessary for fiscal years 1990 and 1991 to pay for the costs of operating the GOES-3 satellite, for installing the earth stations and training engineers to operate them, and for administering the program; and

(11) additional but undetermined funding may also be necessary in fiscal year 1991 to begin acquiring replacement satellite capacity for the GOES-3 satellite after it goes out of service.

(b) It is the purpose of this section to assist in the acquisition of satellite communications services until viable alternatives are available and to provide interim funding in order that the PEACESAT Program may again serve the educational, medical, and cultural needs of the Pacific Basin communities.

(c)(1) The Secretary of Commerce shall expeditiously negotiate for and acquire satellite space segment capacity and related ground segment equipment to provide communications services for former users of the ATS-1 satellite of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(2)(A) The Secretary of Commerce shall provide to the manager of the PEACESAT Program such funds, from appropriations authorized under subsection (d) of this section, as the Secretary considers necessary to manage the operation of the satellite communications services provided with the capacity and equipment acquired under this subsection.

(B) The recipient of funds under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall keep such records as may reasonably be necessary to enable the Secretary of Commerce to conduct an effective audit of such funds. Records.

(C) The Secretary of Commerce and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access for the purpose of audit and examination to any books, documents, papers, and records of such recipient that are pertinent to the funds received under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph. Records.

(d) There are authorized to be appropriated $1,000,000 for fiscal year 1990 and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 1991 for use by the Secretary of Commerce in the negotiation for and acquisition of capacity and equipment under subsection (c)(1) of this section and the management of the operation of satellite communications services under subsection (c)(2) of this section. Sums appropriated pursuant to this subsection may be used by the Secretary of Commerce to cover administrative costs associated with the provisions of this section.

(e) The Secretary of Commerce shall consult with appropriate departments and agencies of the Federal Government, representatives of the PEACESAT Program, and other affected parties regarding the development of a long-term solution to the communications needs of the Pacific Ocean region. Within one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall report to the Congress regarding such consultation. Reports.

Health care.
Rural areas.
42 USC 295j note.

SEC. 3. (a) It is the purpose of this section to improve the ability of rural health providers to use communications to obtain health information and to consult with others concerning the delivery of patient care. Such enhanced communications ability may assist in—

(1) improving and extending the training of rural health professionals; and

(2) improving the continuity of patient care in rural areas.

(b) The Secretary of Commerce, in conjunction with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall establish an advisory panel (hereafter in this section referred to as the "Panel") to develop recommendations for the improvement of rural health care through the collection of information needed by providers and the improvement in the use of communications to disseminate such information.

(c) The Panel shall be composed of individuals from organizations with rural constituencies and practitioners from health care disciplines, representatives of the National Library of Medicine, and representatives of different health professions schools, including nurse practitioners.

(d) The Panel may select consultants to provide advice to the Panel regarding the types of information that rural health care practitioners need, the procedures to gather and disseminate such information, and the types of communications equipment and training needed by rural health care practitioners to obtain access to such information.

Reports.

(e) Not later than 1 year after the Panel is established under subsection (b), the Secretary of Commerce shall prepare and submit, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate and to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, a report summarizing the recommendations made by the Panel under subsection (b).

(f) There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Commerce to carry out this section $1,000,000 to remain available until expended.

SEC. 4. (a) Section 226 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 226) is amended by striking "30" each place it appears in subsection (b) (1) and (2), subsection (c)(1), and subsection (h)(1)(A) and inserting in lieu thereof "90".

(b) Section 226(b)(1) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 226(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (H) by adding "and" at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (I) by striking "; and" and inserting in lieu thereof a period; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (J).

Approved November 15, 1990.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3310 (S. 1839):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 101-317 (Comm. on Energy and Commerce).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 101-302 accompanying S. 1839 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:
Vol. 135 (1989): Oct. 30, considered and passed House.
Vol. 136 (1990): Oct. 24, considered and passed Senate, amended, in lieu of S. 1839.
Oct. 26, House concurred in Senate amendment.

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